

Characters

- SPENCER KAMIYA, *forty-year-old aerospace engineer*
- LAURA TANIGUCHI, *his married sister, age forty-five*
- TOKU TANIGUCHI, *her husband, forty-seven*
- DEBBIE, SPENCER' *s sister, thirty-four*
- FUMIKO KAMIYA, *the matriarch, seventy*
- AKI KAMIYA, SPENCER' *s uncle, seventy-five*
- NOBU KAMIYA, AKI' *s son, forty-seven*
- SUSAN KAMIYA, NOBU' *s white wife, forty-five*
- DANIEL KAMIYA, NOBU' *s son, twenty*
- MAXWELL LAM, SPENCER' *s high-school friend*

Time: Summer of 1980.

Place: A secluded beach park on O`ahu.

Scenery: High bushes are upstage. Entrances are stage left, upstage from behind the bushes, and stage right. A picnic table and two benches are situated center stage. A low, manmade stone wall downstage runs across the stage. Assorted plants flourish in the area.

Act 1

Act 1, Scene 1

ACT ONE Scene 1

(A beautiful day, nearing noon. LAURA and DEBBIE enter from left. LAURA is wearing walking shorts and shirt, with slippers. DEBBIE has on a two-piece bathing suit with a terry cloth hapi coat. They clean the table and prepare it with a tablecloth. There are already picnic items on the stage: ice chest, bucket, aluminum tub, lauhala basket, etc)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Not even lunch time and already I tired.

DEBBIE

Well, whose idea was get up five in da morning?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

We gotta make da lunch, eh. Anyway, you da one wanted to have da picnic.

DEBBIE

Well, since Spenca came home to visit, I tought maybe we can come out here again — like in da old days.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Forget da old days. You too young to talk about da old days. Wait till you come old like Uncle Aki.

DEBBIE

Aeh, Uncle Aki not old. He get mo' energy dan me.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Of all da time for Spenca to come home.

DEBBIE

Why? He had to, for Daddy's seven-year memorial service.

(TOKU enters from right, carrying a bucket. He wears swim shorts.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Laura, Debbie, try look dis.

DEBBIE

Wat you get?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

One real surprise.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Oh, octopus.

DEBBIE

Aaarrgghh, da real uji.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Kinda small, eh.

DEBBIE

You wen' catch 'um?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Of course.

DEBBIE

Still alive?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah, try touch 'um.

(He grabs her wrist and brings her hand toward the bucket.)

DEBBIE

Aaaaahhhh, nnnnnoooo! Toku, noooo! Laura!

(TOKU breaks up, laughing, and stops.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Warui no you. No tease her like dat.

DEBBIE

Toku, you almost give me one heart attack.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Wassamadda, Debbie, you like octopus.

DEBBIE

Yeah, but I like 'um dead, not alive. Go boil 'um and make some miso sauce, den okay.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No matta how old I get, I neva going undastand you wahines.

(He exits left.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

He still one kid, no. Sometimes I wonda why I wen' marry him.

DEBBIE

Because of da kid in him.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Den I wonda why you wen' divorce Elton.

DEBBIE

Because of da kid in him.

(They laugh and resume preparations for lunch.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Debbie.

DEBBIE

Yeah?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Mama not going be happy if you run off wit' Jeremy.

DEBBIE

I know. She making me crazy. She still think I going back to Elton. I told her, "No way, Mama, Elton is da past. Jeremy is da future." But you know Mama, she still old-fashioned. She doesn't believe in divorce.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Where Spenca?

DEBBIE

I dunno. Max and him probably roaming around some place. Why? Someting wrong?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No.

DEBBIE

I notice you acting kinda funny toward Spenca.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Can tell?

DEBBIE

Sure. I not blind.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I jus' no like he stay around now.

DEBBIE

Why, wat he did?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

He always had bad timing.

DEBBIE

It's about da business, yeah?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Why people no can keep da area clean.

(*She picks up some rubbish and throws it in a large trash can.*)

No consideration for odda people.

DEBBIE

Laura, you heard me?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Afta Spenca go back to L`A`, den you can write him da news if you like.

DEBBIE

Me? I don't care if he knows, but you acting like —

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I just no need Spenca here now. For wat he came back anyway; he no care about da family. All he care about is himself. He was always da spoiled one. Get everyting his way.

DEBBIE

Well, maybe if you talk to him, he might undastand...

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Look, one penny. Maybe my luck going change.

(*She picks it up. There is laughter upstage behind the bushes.*)

DEBBIE

I going get my camera.

(*She exits left.*)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Wait, no go now.

(SPENCER *and* MAX *enter.*)

SPENCER KAMIYA

I really love dis place.

LAM

Not bad.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Haven't been here since I was one kid.

LAM

'S nuttin'. I live in Hawai`i all my life and I neva been here before.

SPENCER KAMIYA

My faddah used to bring us here wen we were young. 'S right, eh, Laura?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yeah.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Still some places on O`ahu where you can get away, eh.

LAM

If I like get away, I go on a junket to Vegas.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I bet Hawai`i people travel more dan anybody else in da world.

LAM

Yeah. Every time you look up, somebody you know flying off to somewhere. My Auntie Jane jus' got back from Canada. One nodda uncle and auntie going off to Europe. My bruddah and his wife wen' to da Orient last year. It's a wonda dey no all get lost.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Good old island fever. 'S one reason why I left Hawai`i.

(LAURA exits left. The men go to the stone wall.)

LAM

See da sights around da world and leave Waikiki to da tourists.

SPENCER KAMIYA

It's too bad, all da giant condos on O`ahu. Too much, eh. Huge phallic symbols rising in da sky — erect, demanding — a massive jungle of concrete pricks looking for a climax.

LAM

Chee, you get vivid imagination, yeah. You on drugs or someting?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Hawai`i has sure changed from da fifties wen we were in high school.

LAM

True. But you changed, too. You not da same person who left Hawai'i twenty-one years ago. Wen you wen' up, you was good-looking. Now you look at you.

(*Shudders.*)

No wonda you not married yet.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, not my fault. I asked dis girl in L'A' to marry me. But she said no. Hell, we even lived together for six months.

LAM

Yeah, 's one good ting about living on da mainland. You can shack up wit' one wahine and nobody bodda you. If I did dat here and my muddah find out — good night — she probably chase da girl out wit' one broom, den wack me ova da head.

SPENCER KAMIYA

To her you still one sixteen-year-old virgin.

LAM

Aeh, she my muddah, eh, why break her heart. She deserve one pure son — if only in her mind.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Get married and make your muddah happy.

LAM

No mo' time. Gotta keep moving, gotta stay young. Aeh, I saw Nakasone last month at da bank. Da bugga was dragging his ass, man. 'S wat four kids do to you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Well, I was ready to settle down. But Gwen said no. You believe dat?

LAM

Sure. You ain't no prize.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, listen. I said, "What's wrong? You found somebody else?" And she said, "All you men think that. You always think there's someone else. I just don't want anyone tied to me. I don't need it."

LAM

Hoo, da tough wahine. Make my you-know-wat shrivel up.

SPENCER KAMIYA

So I said, "Then why are we living together?" And she said, "Because it's convenient." Can you beat dat? Convenient. Like I was da corner drugstore or someting. I was a convenience.

LAM

Yeah, we live in da age of convenience. We have pouch-bag dinnas, douche-bag cleanas. We aerosol our armpits and pollute da atmosphere da same time. I can undastand why some people wanna go back to nature. Keep tings simple. Make life easy.

SPENCER KAMIYA

But some people don't like it dat way. Dey want to make things complicated. Dey like complex relationships.

LAM

I know, I know. Like women, right? Dey make too many demands. Dey expect too much. I told dis wahine, "No make fuss, no make me nervous, no mess up my life." But she no give up.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Who dis wahine?

LAM

My muddah.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Max, I'm trying to be serious.

LAM

Aeh, my muddah is da mos' serious woman I know.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Well, anyway, Gwen and I broke up.

LAM

Where she was from?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Texas.

LAM

Oh, no wonda. 'S wat you get fool around wit' one Texas girl. You tink one Hawai'i girl going tell you dat. Hawai'i girls da bes', no forget dat. I gotta introduce you to some nice local girls. But before I do dat, how 'bout we hit da bars tomorrow night?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Cannot. Got a memorial service for my faddah. Make it da next night.

LAM

You got it. Aeh, rememba wen you came home afta graduating from USC and I took you to all da bars around town?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, dis one bar maid at Nihonbashi really liked me. She was kinda pretty.

LAM

Aeh, dose bar girls look good in da candlelight glow, but take 'um out in da bright light of day, and dey make your liver cringe.

SPENCER KAMIYA

No get jealous. Just because she liked me betta.

LAM

Aeh, once I met dis bar girl who really looked terrific in da booth. Dim light, you know, cozy atmosphere. And she was getting me hot, rubbing my thigh wit' her hand. Chee, I tought I was falling in love. I told her, "Aeh, darling, you like go see one samurai movie at Toyo Theata?" So we wen' set one date for one matinee. Wen I saw her in da daylight, I almost faint. She look like Boris Karloff.

SPENCER KAMIYA

She wasn't dat ugly.

LAM

Look like his twin sista. Maybe I was half drunk in da bar, I dunno, but afta dat I neva trust da lighting in bars.

(DEBBIE returns with a camera and a bag of camera supplies.)

DEBBIE

No tell me you guys still talking about da old days.

SPENCER KAMIYA

No just da old days, Debbie. Da good old days.

DEBBIE

Wat you trying to do, recapture your youth?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Nothing can replace da fabulous fifties.... Where you going?

DEBBIE

I wanna see wat kine shots I can get dis side.

(*She exits right.*)

LAM

Aeh, Spense, wen you going back to L`A`?

SPENCER KAMIYA

I dunno. Maybe neva.

LAM

Wat?

SPENCER KAMIYA

I got nobody waiting for me dere. Not now, at least.

LAM

I tell you one ting. Lotta guys came home from da mainland. Dey neva like it up dere.

SPENCER KAMIYA

L`A` not bad, especially Redondo Beach, where I live. Betta dan most places. But, I dunno, maybe because I turned forty. But I wonda if I neva make one mistake moving to da mainland.

LAM

But you hadda live up dere because of your job, right?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, 's where da job was. But now I kinda get dat feeling, you know, but I still neva make up my mind yet. Maybe, just maybe, time to come home.

LAM

Hawai`i calls to her native sons to return to her shores.

(*He uses his hands to make a horn-like sound, like blowing into a conch shell.*)

AKI

(*Offstage.*)

No, no, no, how many times I gotta tell you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

No say nuttin' yet.

LAM

Yeah, no worry.

(AKI and DANIEL enter from upstage.)

AKI

You listen to me, I no steer you wrong. 'S wat grandfaddahs fo' — to give advice. And I tell you wat grandsons fo' — to listen to dat advice.

DANIEL KAMIYA

But why can't I be a nurseryman like you?

AKI

No talk dumb like dat. Aeh, Spenca, talk to your cousin Daniel.

SPENCER KAMIYA

What's up?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Well, all I'm saying —

AKI

He like take ova da nursery afta I retire.

(To DANIEL.)

You like your muddah get mad at me or wat? She neva send you to University of Hawai`i so you can be one nurseryman.

DANIEL KAMIYA

It was partly your fault. I always helped you in the nursery during the summers. I learned everything from you.

AKI

Dat was my mistake.

(To SPENCER and MAX')

You see dis kid? He smart and he stupid. Nobu and Susan send him to Punahou School so he can go Harvard or Yale and become one docta or lawya. No, he like go UH' Okay, go. Den he like study philosophy. Fo' wat? No need go school fo' dat. Wen I was young, da bes' philosophers I heard neva had education. But dey was dere in `A`ala Park sitting on da benches talking about life. Make sense too, wat dey said. It says right dere in da book: "A nurseryman cannot be a philosopher and a philosopher cannot be a nurseryman."

DANIEL KAMIYA

What book?

AKI

Da Grandpa Aki Book of Life.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Uncle, I don't see why Daniel can't be a nurseryman.

AKI

Spenca, you live on da mainland too long; you no count. Max, wat you tink? You going buy one hibiscus plant from him if you know he was one philosopher?

LAM

Chee, Aki, I hate hibiscus.

AKI

(*To DANIEL.*)

You see.

DANIEL KAMIYA

That's not an answer.

AKI

'S good enough for me. I gotta go, get someting to do.

(AKI *exits right.*)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Old age hasn't changed Uncle Aki one bit.

DANIEL KAMIYA

He knows what the nursery means to me. I like working the soil with my hands; it feels good. During the summers, I lived at the old house in Kalihi with Grandpa.

(AKI *returns.*)

AKI

Aeh, where da toilet around here? I tought was dat way.

LAM

You like go benjo? C'mon, I show you. I gotta go too.

AKI

I not going embarrass you if I have to stop behind one bush, eh?

LAM

Me okay, I dunno wat da bush going say.

(They exit upstage behind the bushes.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Funny. My father wanted me to take over his building contractor company, but I had other ideas. I wanted to be an aerospace engineer.

DANIEL KAMIYA

That's the point. You did what you wanted to do and you're happy. I should be able to do what I want too.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, it's important. Sorta sounds like the way I felt years ago when I told my father I wanted to go to the mainland. Good thing Laura was able to help my father and take over the company after he passed away.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Uncle took your decision okay?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Huh?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Uncle Tosh. He wasn't mad or anything like that?

SPENCER KAMIYA

My father? Oh, no. I don't think so. Well, we never really talked about it.

DANIEL KAMIYA

What projects have you worked on? Viking? Venus? Things like that?

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, mostly military stuff. Can't really say much because of security reasons.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Sounds exciting.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Danny, your career — you sure about yourself? Maybe you should think it over some more. You don't want

to disappoint your parents.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Well, it's a tough decision, but I know what I want.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

(*Offstage.*)

Watch out, now.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

(*Offstage.*)

Okay, okay.

(TOKU *helps* FUMIKO *by holding one arm.* LAURA *carries a half-filled bag of seaweed.*)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Aeh, Spenca, we pick some seaweed for you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah? Chee, only half a bag? When we were kids, we used to bring home at least two bags.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Mo' and mo' people learning da taste of ogo.

(FUMIKO *sits on the bench.* TOKU *exits left.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Even da mempachi hard to find. Not like befo'.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yeah, we gotta search da markets for da fish. Ohtani's at `A`ala Park or Tamashiro's in Kalihi.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I don't even see mempachi in L`A` fish markets. Aeh, let's look tomorrow.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Toku can take you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Toku never change, eh.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Toku? Wat you mean?

SPENCER KAMIYA

You know, he still take it easy, eh. Daddy used to kid about Toku running off to go fishing all the time.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Toku no go fishing like befo'. He really work hard. He was one good son-in-law to Daddy. He listen to Daddy, help him. I neva hear him talk back to Daddy one time.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

'S right.

(TOKU returns, stops at a distance.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Aeh, Mama, you see da blanket ova dere, by da tree?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Yeah.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

I wen' lay 'um out for you unda da shade. Go 'head, go rest.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh, good, but I not tired now.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

You sure? You know wat, I go lie down dere little while, test 'um out for you.

(AKI and MAX enter from upstage.)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh, okay.

(TOKU exits.)

AKI

Wen we going eat?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Still little early, Uncle. Anyway, we gotta wait for Nobu and Susan.

AKI

No make Max wait too long, eh. His stomach was growling like one gorilla in one cave.

LAM

Aeh, bull lie, no believe him.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Okay, Uncle, we go to da car. I get oranges you can snack on.

AKI

Only orange?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I no like spoil your appetite.

AKI

(*To MAX*)

You like orange?

LAM

I eat anything.

AKI

Okay, Laura, go get da oranges for us.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

You not coming wit' me?

AKI

No ask one old man like me walk too much. I going stay here talk story wit' Max.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Danny, can you help me?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Sure.

(*They exit left.*)

AKI

How come your muddah wen' name you Maxwell?

LAM

She love Maxwell House Coffee.

AKI

Lucky ting she neva like Chock Full O'Nuts.

(*They proceed downstage to the stone wall out of earshot of SPENCER and FUMIKO.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Where Debbie?

SPENCER KAMIYA

She went to take some pictures.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Dat girl, no can stay still even fo' one minute.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Why she wen' divorce Elton?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

No can do nuttin'. Daddy wen' try so hard for dem. He even put dem in da back house he was planning for you. Dey neva have to pay rent. Daddy wanted Elton at least get his degree from UH' Now we dunno where Elton stay.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Daddy was planning da back house for me?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Huh?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Da back house. Was for me?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Dat was his idea, but dat was befo' you wen' to da mainland.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, I neva know dat.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh, he wen' build da house anyway to rent out. Lucky, though, 'cause Debbie living dere now.

SPENCER KAMIYA

How come you and Daddy neva tell me about da house?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Wat Daddy going say? No go to da mainland and I build you one house in da back? He had in his head you going get married, raise kids, so da back house was perfect. Especially if you was going work wit' him in da business and take ova for him someday. But not important now. Where Debbie? Go look for her.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, wen I left for da mainland, Daddy was mad at me?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Fo' wat you ask da kine question now? Baka, no. Dat was long time ago.

(DANIEL enters from left with beach-type chair, zabuton, and plastic bag with oranges. He gives the oranges to AKI.)

DANIEL KAMIYA

Auntie, come sit in this chair, more comfortable.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh, t'ank you, Daniel.

(TOKU enters with a fishing pole.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Mama, I going fish little while. Tell Laura call me wen lunch ready.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Okay, go, go.

LAM

Get good fishing around here?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Depends, yeah. We go.

(They exit right. DANIEL exits left.)

AKI

Spenca, wen you going back mainland?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Oh, I was thinking I might stay till Mama go on her Japan trip.

AKI

Your Buddhist group travel like-a hell, eh?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Wat else us widows going do? All da husbands die, so we gotta go in bunches.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I guess Daddy was too busy to travel.

AKI

Well, da business meant everyting to him.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

He tought if he leave da business for one minute, someting bad was going happen.

AKI

He neva care travel, anyway. Once in a while, he like go back see Kona, but 's all.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

You, too, Aki, you jus' da same. You neva go any place.

AKI

Aeh, da Las Vegas trip was enough.

(*To SPENCER.*)

Couple years ago I wen' on dis five-day gambling junket. I sign dis paper, dey give me chips. I shoot craps, sign one mo' paper, get mo' chips. By da time I was ready to go home, I lost two tousand dollars. Make me sick. Wen I was young, took me one year to earn dat much. Wen I get old, I lose all dat in five days. 'S da trouble nowdays — inflation.

(DEBBIE *and* LAURA *enter from left.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Debbie, I was worried about you.

DEBBIE

Oh, Mama, you always say dat.

SPENCER KAMIYA

You took your pictures already. Fast, eh?

DEBBIE

Sure, I'm not middle age like you.

AKI

'S right, no. You old man already.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, Uncle, forty years old.

AKI

Good night! Dat means me wat? Sixty-eight, eh?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No, no, you no can cheat like dat. You going be seventy-six dis year.

AKI

Bull lie! How can? Only yestaday I wen' get married, my boy Nobu was born, I build up my nursery. Only yestaday, I tell you.

DEBBIE

Uncle, you still young — young enough to get married again and start one whole new family.

AKI

I not dat young.

DEBBIE

Too bad, I was going find one wife for you.

AKI

Nemmine me. You get your bruddah here not married yet.

DEBBIE

Oh, no worry about him. He going find one mainland girl. 'S right, eh, Spenca.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, lotta girls up dere.

DEBBIE

'S Toku fishing?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah.

DEBBIE

Toku, wat you catch?

(*She exits.*)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Mama, Debbie made up her mind. She going to da Middle East wit' Jeremy.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Middle East? What for?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Some photojournal assignment.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Not dangerous?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

She doesn't think so.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

You da olda sista; tell her no go.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Good chance for Debbie. If she no go now, she going always feel bad.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

I know, but, she cannot run around da world jus' like nuttin'. Wat if she get hurt?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

You cannot hold her back. She's not a baby. 'S her life. You let Spenca go to da mainland and he was only one kid.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, but that was different.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Wat different? Because you were a boy?

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, not that, but —

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Den why Daddy neva let me go to a mainland school wen I wanted to go?

SPENCER KAMIYA

You never wanted to go to the mainland.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

How you know? You could read my mind? All you thought about dose days was yourself. Anyway, dis isn't your problem.

SPENCER KAMIYA

How long would Debbie be gone?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Two months.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Why so long?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Jeremy wants to take Debbie to England on da way back, show her where he grew up. Look, Spenca, I did wit'out your questions all dese years, I can do wit'out dem now.

AKI

Aeh, you folks, about time you came.

NOBU KAMIYA

(*Offstage.*)

Hello, everybody!

AKI

Hungry, you know. Everybody waiting to eat.

(NOBU and SUSAN enter from left. NOBU carries a picnic basket.)

SUSAN KAMIYA

I know. Late again. Sorry. Hello, Fumiko, how are you?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh, good. Everyting okay.

SUSAN KAMIYA

That's good. I brought some food, Laura.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

You didn't have to.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I felt like playing housewife.

NOBU KAMIYA

Aeh, who's that stranger over there?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Hi, Nobu.

NOBU KAMIYA

Susan, look at this old man. Auntie, we better get Spenca married before too late.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Yeah, go find one wife for him.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Spencer, it's so nice to see you again.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Susan, you're looking great.

AKI

How come you took so long?

NOBU KAMIYA

Sorry, Pop, I was talking to a few of my future constituents.

SUSAN KAMIYA

He's determined to get elected this time.

NOBU KAMIYA

I feel so confident, it's frightening. My time has come.

SUSAN KAMIYA

He was proposing an offshore gambling casino, three miles off Waikiki.

NOBU KAMIYA

You know how much money Hawai'i people gamble away in Vegas?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Tons of it.

NOBU KAMIYA

Right. My way, we keep most of that money in the state, where it can do some good. Hell, even Pop dumped a bundle in Vegas.

AKI

You too late. I already confess.

NOBU KAMIYA

All that gambling money, we can use for welfare, education, senior citizen programs.

(MAX *enters from right.*)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Oh, Susan, Nobu, I want you to meet my buddy from high school days — Max Lam.

LAM

Hi.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Nice to meet you, Max.

NOBU KAMIYA

Max Lam? Nobu Kamiya. Where do you live?

LAM

Where do I live? Ah, in a two-bedroom condo. But, ah, I use one bedroom as an office.

SUSAN KAMIYA

He wants to know if you're in his voting district.

LAM

Oh, Pearl City.

NOBU KAMIYA

There goes another vote. Never mind, we still gotta talk. Got some ideas I want to throw at you. No curves, straight down the middle.

AKI

Well, let's eat, kau kau time.

NOBU KAMIYA

You come from a big family?

LAM

Four sisters and one brother.

NOBU KAMIYA

Lots of aunts, uncles, cousins?

LAM

Too many.

NOBU KAMIYA

Good, good.

(NOBU *and* MAX *exit left.*)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Toku, Debbie, kau kau!

SUSAN KAMIYA

Brought your favorite, Aki. Nishime.

AKI

No kidding.

(*He opens a container.*)

Spenca, you believe one haole can make good nishime?

SUSAN KAMIYA

It's not that good.

AKI

Try taste.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Hmm, `ono.

AKI

Told you. Susan smart cook Japanee food.

(DEBBIE enters. She hugs SUSAN from the back. SUSAN reacts affectionately.)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Not enough room here.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I guess we can go on da grass unda da tree.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Aki, we go move ova dere.

AKI

Wat, I jus' started to eat dis musubi.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Gomen, gomen.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

You lucky your daughta-in-law kawaigaru you.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Oh, he's my pet.

AKI

No can help, I'm so cute, yeah.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Now, Aki, don't get a swell head.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Okay, everybody, we moving ova dere.

(The women gather up the items to exit left. DANIEL enters from upstage.)

DANIEL KAMIYA

Hi, Mom.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Hello, dear.

(She pecks him on the cheek.)

AKI

You know, Susan, you da bes' daughta-in-law I eva had.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I'm the only daughter-in-law you ever had.

AKI

No, is dat right? How you like dat.

(*They exit left. TOKU enters.*)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Catch anything?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No mo' luck.

(*He exits left. SPENCER sits alone at the picnic table. There is general chatter and laughter offstage.*)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

(*Offstage.*)

Spenca, you like one engraved invitation or wat?

(*SPENCER looks offstage, then slowly walks off as the lights fade to black.*)

Act 1, Scene 2

Scene 2

(*A half hour later. LAURA and TOKU enter.*)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Why you drag me away from da food? I neva finish.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

We had enough.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No, no. Jus' because you full, dat no mean I full.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I wanted to tell you someting.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Why you neva tell me ova dere?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I no like Spenca hear.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Why, you going talk stink about him?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Not dat. Now listen. I no like you mention da business and wat I going do. I no like Spenca know.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

He going find out soona or later.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yes, but not now.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

You shame of someting?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Shame of wat?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

About me. I know I wasn't dat much help wit' da business.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Not dat.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

I know Spenca going tink I neva do enough.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

You did plenty.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

But no can help, eh. I no mo' da kine head.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Toku, Toku, listen to me. Wat you trying to take da blame for? Not your fault. I jus' no like give Spenca da satisfaction of —

(SPENCER *and* MAX *enter*.)

LAM

Boy, I sure wen' eat.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Promise, no say nuttin'.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Okay, I try, but...

LAM

I think I betta go on a diet. Look at dis.

(He sticks out his stomach in an exaggerated manner.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

You in really sad shape, man.

LAM

Aeh, wait. Not dat bad, eh?

(He now sucks in his stomach and struts around lightly.)

How's dis? Love me, love my incredible body.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, Toku, you finish eat already? We left plenty behind.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No, I gotta eat some mo'.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Have to clean up.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Wait, wait, no clean up till I finish eating.

(He scoots off as LAURA follows.)

LAM

Dat Toku is one nice guy.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah.

LAM

Good, eh, stay wit' your family like dis. Betta dan live alone on da mainland.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Maybe. You notice my sista Laura act sorta annoyed at me?

LAM

No. But, you know, some sistas li'dat. Dey get in deir moods, auwe, look out, bruddah, head for da hills.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Well, I'm getting some strange vibrations from her.

LAM

My sista Sherry, wen she get cranky, she spit fire at everybody. I dunno how she do dat. She shoulda been one magician.

(SUSAN *and* AKI *enter.*)

SUSAN KAMIYA

I think Danny will do well at Yale.

AKI

Oh yeah, dat kid smart. No need worry.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Be honest with me, Aki. Am I interfering in his life?

AKI

You his muddah, he going listen to you. Or I kick his ass.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I just want him to be happy, and in the long run I know he won't regret it.

AKI

You right, you right. He belong in Yale.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Danny's going to Yale?

SUSAN KAMIYA

We hope so. I want him to study on the mainland, like you, Spencer.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Ha, I'm not a good example.

SUSAN KAMIYA

But it was worth it. Look at you. Successful, educated —

LAM

Crazy.

SPENCER KAMIYA

He's right. Yeah, when I was young, I couldn't wait to get to the mainland. I had enough of Hawai'i at the time. So I traveled to new places, saw new faces. What about you, Susan? Been back to Michigan often?

SUSAN KAMIYA

No, after my mother died, there wasn't much point. Hawai'i is my home now. As a child, I grew up on an island, then I move thousands of miles away to live on another island.

LAM

No kidding. You lived on an island — in Michigan?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Yes, a place called Grosse Ile.

LAM

Gross Eel? Why, they have lots of fat moray eels there?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Eels? Oh no. Grosse Ile is French for Grand Island. G-R-O-S-S-E I-L-E.

SPENCER KAMIYA

(*Laughing.*)

'S wat you get live in Hawai'i all your life. Moray eel, cheez.

LAM

Aeh, watch dis moray eel bite you.

(*He grabs SPENCER' s arm and pretends to gnaw on it.*)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, aeh, watch it, look out!

(*They fall to the ground, tangled up. NOBU and DANIEL enter, talking to each other. NOBU dumps rubbish*

in a trash can upstage left.)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Are you hurt?

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, no, just a little friendly wrestling we used to do in school.

LAM

Yeah, in the sixth grade.

AKI

See wat happen wen you guys no get married — you neva grow up.

NOBU KAMIYA

Susan, can we see you a minute?

SUSAN KAMIYA

All right. Excuse me.

(SPENCER gives MAX a friendly shove.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Make ass, eh, you.

LAM

Me make ass? You make ass.

(AKI, SPENCER, and MAX sit at the picnic table.)

NOBU KAMIYA

How are you feeling?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Fine. Why?

(NOBU takes out his stress card from a shirt pocket.)

NOBU KAMIYA

Here. Hold this card with your thumb and let me see if you're under any stress.

(She holds the card as requested.)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Oh, Nobu, I'm perfectly happy and at peace. You know I don't believe in this card anyway.

NOBU KAMIYA

I have something to tell you. Or Daniel does. But let me see.

(*He takes the card back.*)

Well, the color is blue. You are under no stress.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I told you.

NOBU KAMIYA

Okay, put your mother under stress.

DANIEL KAMIYA

I want to become a nurseryman.

SUSAN KAMIYA

A what?

DANIEL KAMIYA

A nurseryman, like Grandpa.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Did he say...

NOBU KAMIYA

Nurseryman, yes.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I don't believe... what is this, a joke? I'm not laughing. Please don't joke with me. I... I... what? What?

NOBU KAMIYA

(*To DANIEL.*)

You see what you did.

(*To SUSAN.*)

I told him he was crazy. But I can't get through to him. He says his lifelong ambition is to be a nurseryman. You figure it out.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Danny, you're not serious.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yes, I am. I've thought it out seriously and carefully.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Wait, your grandpa will have something to say. I was just talking with him.

(SPENCER *motions to MAX that they go and they exit behind the bushes. The others go to AKI.*)

AKI

I know, I know. I told him he was crazy. I no like one crazy guy work for me. Crazy guys go into politics like Nobu.

NOBU KAMIYA

That's right. They don't call me Crazy Kamiya for nothing.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Honey, with your education and your mind, you could be so much more. No offense, Aki.

AKI

'S okay, you right. I became one nurseryman because I neva had education.

DANIEL KAMIYA

There's nothing wrong with being a nurseryman.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Of course not. But you could do more good being something else.

DANIEL KAMIYA

The nurseryman belongs to an honorable profession. You work with the land, growing plants and trees and making our environment livable. In the future, the nurseryman will become even more important when our natural resources are destroyed, when cement replaces greenery, and glass and steel cover Hawai'i. Nurserymen will keep the Islands green, fighting against a hostile mentality. Where developers lay cement, nurserymen will plant life. We will be the last bastion of sanity in a world gone mad with clanging machines, ravaging technology, and devastating sterility.

SUSAN KAMIYA

How long did you rehearse that speech?

DANIEL KAMIYA

About a week.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Honey, you sound just like your father.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Is that supposed to be a compliment?

SUSAN KAMIYA

No.

NOBU KAMIYA

What?

SUSAN KAMIYA

I'm sorry, dear.

(*To* DANIEL.)

What I mean is, you and your father sometimes get caught up in your own ideas and go nowhere, like a cat chasing its tail.

NOBU KAMIYA

When do I do that?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Mom, the work begins with the land. It's what the Hawai`i state motto says: "Ua-mau-ke-ea-o-ka-`aina-i-ka-pono" — The life of the land is perpetuated by righteousness.

NOBU KAMIYA

Susan, you can't fight the way he feels.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I want something more for him.

NOBU KAMIYA

It's his life.

SUSAN KAMIYA

You want him to be a nurseryman?

NOBU KAMIYA

Of course not. It's a dumb idea. But we Kamiyas are real smart in coming up with dumb ideas. It's in the Kamiya blood. I think what I'm doing is right and nobody's going to stop me. It's the same with Danny. He can take care of himself. A good fight never hurt anybody.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I can't fight the two of you.

DANIEL KAMIYA

It's not your fight, Mom.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Yes, it is. I didn't marry your father and raise you just so I could stand on the sideline and watch you screw up your life.

NOBU KAMIYA

Now cool down, honey. You have to understand that Danny is obstinate, just like my father.

AKI

Obsti wat? No use da kine hybolic word about me, eh. I dunno if you talking stink or wat.

DANIEL KAMIYA

It means you're stubborn as a jackass.

AKI

Okay, dat I undastand. 'S true.

NOBU KAMIYA

Let's take a walk. There are some people by the banyan tree I haven't met yet.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Campaigning again?

NOBU KAMIYA

Give me your thumb. Right here. Check your stress.

(*He steers her off left.*)

SUSAN KAMIYA

I haven't finished with Danny.

NOBU KAMIYA

Later. The fish will still be in the pond when you return with fresh bait. Red. Bright red. High-level stress. STRESS in capital letters.

(*They exit.*)

DANIEL KAMIYA

I didn't think Mom would be the hard case.

AKI

Well, dat shows you dunno your muddah dat good.

DANIEL KAMIYA

She's so busy with her society junk, running around — benefits, parties, meetings.

AKI

She gotta do lotta dat to help your faddah.

DANIEL KAMIYA

He still hasn't been elected.

AKI

Your muddah put all her strength in you from wen you was one baby.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yes, how do I love thee, son, let me count the ways.

AKI

Aeh, aeh, aeh, watch your mouth. I get ova fifty years more hard living dan you, so I figga I know wat I talking about. You listen to me. Your muddah eva tell you about her bruddah Roy?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Only that he died in the war.

AKI

Iwo Jima, 's where he wen' ma-ke. And your grandfaddah in Michigan, Mason, well, Roy was his only son. And wen your muddah told her family she like marry Nobu, dat was like one bomb wen' explode. Her faddah was mad like-a hell. He said if she marry one Jap, she no need come home, eva. Was only twelve years afta da war, you undastand, so was tough on your muddah. But she had guts. Your muddah get mo' guts dan you, me, and your faddah put togedda. So she got married anyway and came to Hawai'i to live. And in dose days, your muddah had to face my wife, Tomi, your grandmuddah. You rememba her as one fussy old lady. Well, I tell you, she was one fussy middle-age lady wen your muddah came. Was not so easy deal wit' your grandmuddah. So your muddah had to struggle here too, but she made it.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yeah, I see that part, but —

AKI

Aeh, no but me. I no like but. Okay, now I going talk to your Japanese side. Your Michigan grandfaddah wen' die long time ago before he saw you. So I know your muddah like show him: "See, Papa, see your grandson,

Daniel Mason Akira Kamiya, is a... professor of philosophy at Yale... is da president of da United States." But wat she can say now: "Look, Papa, my son da nurseryman."

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yes, I want my life to mean something, but I wanna do it my way.

AKI

Your way, my way, dis way, dat way. Listen now, I going tell you one las' time. No tink I going back you up on dis. I not going let you disappoint your muddah da way I wen' disappoint my muddah long time ago. See, my muddah wanted me to stay in Kona help wit' da farm. But I said no, I ain't no stupid coffee farma. And I wen' run away to Honolulu. And wat I did dere? Gamble, fool around, waste my time. I neva forget da stupid tings I did to my muddah and my faddah. You neva forget da hurt inside.

DANIEL KAMIYA

But you know how good I am in the nursery. You need me. I won't disappoint you.

AKI

I no need you. No tink I need you. Nemmine me. Your muddah mean a lot to me. And you mean a lot to your muddah. Make your muddah happy, and you make me happy. Sometimes you gotta do wat you no like do. Sometimes you gotta make da sacrifice.

(FUMIKO, LAURA, and DEBBIE enter from left; SPENCER, from right.)

AKI

Aeh, Fumi, you came jus' in time. You like go bat'room?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

No, not yet.

AKI

C'mon, c'mon, we go. I lonesome go myself.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Okay, okay.

AKI

Good, we can talk story and go. Danny, you come, too. I like tell you about my muddah, your great-grandmuddah. She was really good at cleaning ears wit' one hairpin, especially my ears.

(AKI, FUMIKO, and DANIEL exit upstage behind the bushes.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama sure got old.

DEBBIE

Wat you expect, Super Mom or something?

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, but the way she walk.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Da arthritis no help.

SPENCER KAMIYA

When did she get arthritis?

DEBBIE

Long time already.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Sometimes at night I gotta rub da Ben-Gay on for her. You know, Spenca, you missed out on lotta family things since you been on da mainland. Wat are memories to us mean nothing to you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I guess so.

DEBBIE

Like da time Daddy fell off da stepladda and konk his head.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Wat?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Wen Uncle Aki found out wat happened, he told us to neva let Daddy climb one stepladder, 'cause he always falling off, even wen he was a kid.

DEBBIE

Yeah, but Daddy only had a concussion. But I neva know dat. I hadda drive him to da hospital 'cause nobody else was home. I was so scared.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Why?

DEBBIE

Why? Hooo, Spenca, 'cause 's da first time I saw Daddy get hurt. You neva saw him helpless, right? He was always helping us. He was always da strong one. So wen I saw Daddy lying on da ground, I screamed so loud

all da birds in da mango tree flew out like crazy.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Then what happened?

DEBBIE

I said, "Daddy, Daddy, you okay?" And he gave me dis funny kine look, so I tought I betta drive him to da hospital jus' in case. And I got him in da car and I was driving, and I forgot where Kapi`olani Hospital was.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yeah, and you go past dere almost every day.

DEBBIE

I know, but I was unda pressure, right. You can't blame me. So I said, "Daddy, where da hospital went?" And he said, "Put da pig in da ground." Man, den I really got scared. So I hadda stop at one service station for help. Da guy tried to give me directions, but I was fading out, so he jumped in and drove Daddy and me to da hospital.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Tell him who da driva was.

DEBBIE

Oh yeah, was Elton, my husband.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Your ex-husband.

DEBBIE

Yeah, yeah, yeah, my ex-husband, my ex-husband.

(TOKU shuffles in from left, wearing swim shorts and looking like he just came out of the ocean.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Debbie, you no going swim?

DEBBIE

No, I no like wet my hair. I get one date wit' Jeremy tonight.

(TOKU lies down and puts his head on LAURA' s lap.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Get up, your hair all wet.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No can help, da ocean not dry.

(*She pushes him up.*)

Max still swimming.

DEBBIE

Spenca, one thing you missed wen you were on da mainland was Toku's cooking.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Well, Laura was too busy to cook so I hadda learn.

SPENCER KAMIYA

What's your best dish?

DEBBIE

Chicken heka.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah, I guess so, chicken heka. I wen' learn from your muddah. Except I put in one special ingredient — Chivas Regal.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Expensive chicken heka, eh.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

I tell you, if you put in da right amount at da right time, taste tarrific. Even da president of da United States can eat my chicken heka.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Chee, too bad you can't open a restaurant, eh.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Aeh, you know, 's wat I was tinkin too. I told Laura afta she sell da business, we should start one restaurant.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Sell what business?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Sorry, wen' slip outta my mouth.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I selling da business.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Daddy's contractor business?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yeah.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, what? You gotta tell me more than that.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

'S da bes' ting we can do.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Why? I don't undastand.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

You don't have to undastand. Not your problem.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I don't think you should sell.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

You have nuttin' to say about it.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Why not? My name's Kamiya too.

DEBBIE

Too late, Spenca.

SPENCER KAMIYA

How Mama feel?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No worry about your muddah, Spenca. We going always take care of her.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I'm not talking about that.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

I know how you feel, but —

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, you don't know how I feel.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No blame Toku.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I'm not blaming him, but I got something to say about all this. You're not gonna sell the business so easy. Daddy worked so hard on it. Man, I don't like what I see.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Wat do you see? Tell me, maybe we all blind but you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Okay, so you and Toku got tired of the business, and —

LAURA TANIGUCHI

We didn't get tired of da —

SPENCER KAMIYA

And maybe you think you're gonna make a lotta money selling it, but you know how much it meant to Daddy. And no tell me Mama doesn't care 'cause I know better. When you took over the business, it was your responsibility to keep it going.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Responsibility? Look who talking. Wat about you? Twenty-one years ago you went to da mainland knowing Daddy wanted you to continue da business afta he retired.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, and you didn't like the idea. You wanted it for yourself.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No be stupid!

SPENCER KAMIYA

Look, you have the business. I don't care. But don't throw away everything now just because you wanna do something else.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Spenca, was not so easy as you tink. No get mad witout hearing da odda side.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Toku wen' work all dese years in da business, a job he hated. He didn't have to. Wasn't his faddah's business. But he worked hard for Daddy. Not like you.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Laura, c'mon already, nemmine da kine stuff.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

(*To SPENCER.*)

Sure, was nice for you. Go off to SC and work on da mainland, do wat you like, nobody to worry about but yourself. You tink you had it tough up dere, studying and working?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, was hard, but I did it.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yeah, go 'head, pat yourself on da back. Big deal! 'S nuttin' compared to da work we had to do. Wat did you achieve on da mainland? Wat did you do dat was so great or important? Tell me dat, tell me wat da —

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Laura, 's enough! No talk already.

(*TOKU exits left.*)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Don't you eva look down on Toku or me. Don't you eva!

(*She strides off. There is an awkward pause.*)

DEBBIE

You were wrong, Spenca.

SPENCER KAMIYA

What, you turning against me too? Before, it was always you and me against Laura.

DEBBIE

Dat was wen we were kids. Things change. Laura's been real good to me. She backed me up lots of times. Wen I had trouble wit' Elton; wen I wanted to study photography; wen I started to date Jeremy and Mama was against it. I think Laura was right in a way. Wen you went to da mainland, you cut off a part of da family — like losing an arm or a leg. But da wound you left is healed now. We got used to not having you around.

SPENCER KAMIYA

What about Mama? How does she feel about giving up the business?

DEBBIE

Oh, Spenca, wat if you neva went to da mainland, wat if you stayed and helped Daddy. Wen you were on da mainland, did you eva think of those things? Were you too happy to think of us? Could you have made things betta if you had stayed home?

SPENCER KAMIYA

I dunno. I guess my mind was on other things. But I thought everything was fine at home.

DEBBIE

I missed you, Spenca, I missed not having my bruddah around. Laura not going admit it, but I know even she missed you, in her own way. And Mama and Daddy. I think dey missed you most of all.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I gotta talk to Mama.

DEBBIE

No bodda her now. Let her rest today. She get enough headache wit' selling... da Kamiya Corporation, and wit' me.

(She exits. SPENCER stands alone, lost in thought as lights dim to black.)

Act 2

Act 2, Scene 1

ACT TWO Scene 1

(Later in the afternoon. DANIEL enters with steel wool and an implement to clean the barbecue grill. He works methodically. TOKU enters.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Cleaning da grill already?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yeah.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

You like I do 'um for you?

DANIEL KAMIYA

No, that's okay.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Me good for da kine work, you know, no problem.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Thanks, but I better do it.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Going get `ono barbecue tonight.

DANIEL KAMIYA

I hope you made the special Toku Taniguchi barbecue sauce.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Oh yeah. Big demand all da time.

DANIEL KAMIYA

You really like cooking, yeah.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Well, guy like me, neva wen' past high school, so I cannot do da kine heavy head work. Make da head sore. So I wen' find someting simple — cooking. I watch, ask questions. Like, wat rosemary and nutmeg good for, why you put da bay leaf in da stew? Den I try mix certain stuff togedda to make da kau kau taste mo' `ono. Sometimes hoooo da big mistake, but sometimes broke da mout', man.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Trial and error. That's how scientists work too. Great.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah? Not bad, eh. But 's nuttin'. See, like you — you always make da honor roll. And you was valediction of your class, eh. Too good, man. If I get your kine head, I make good use. Instead of cooking, I try do someting good for da world. Make da world undastand dat people gotta live togedda and no fight. But you gotta be smart and get good education, so you no shame talk to anybody. You lucky your parents smart, so you smart too. Get connection, you know. See, my faddah dumb like one termite, so wat me? Son of da termite. No mo' head, only good eat wood.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Nah, Toku, you've always been a terrific guy.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Oh yeah. I'm a tarrific guy, I know dat. But I'm a dumb tarrific guy. Aeh, by da way, I always brag about you to my friend. See, he was always telling me how smart his nephew. Like wat da hell I care. So I tell him my nephew one hundred times smarta dan his nephew. By da way, I hope okay if I call you my nephew, even though you not really my nephew. We no mo' even da same blood.

DANIEL KAMIYA

No, I like it. My Uncle Toku.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

'S good. At leas' I can say I get one smart nephew who going to Yale and who so smart he going make da Kamiya family bust all buttons on da shirt because dey so proud. I tink everybody get deir dreams on you. Me too. Danny, someday you going make all our dreams come true.

DANIEL KAMIYA

But what about you, Toku? You have your own dreams.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Nah. My kine dream nuttin'. Catch da biggest fish in da world. Da biggest crab or lobsta. Small stuff li'dat. Nuttin' serious. Nuttin' to change da world.

DANIEL KAMIYA

I thought you said once you wanted to be a professional fisherman.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Oh, dat. Nah... well. If I had da money, long time ago, maybe, yeah. Get one fleet of fishing boats, go out and catch all da fish we can. You know, hook 'um, heave 'um back, hook 'um, heave 'um back, one afta anodda. Woulda been good fun. Yup. But dat was long, long time ago.

DANIEL KAMIYA

You don't feel bad about that? Your dream and...

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No, no. Dat was da dream I had befo' I got married. My biggest dream was hoping Laura and me can have our own kids, maybe raise one boy like you, so I can teach him how to fish. But Laura neva can have babies, so...

DANIEL KAMIYA

You and Laura could've adopted.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

'S wat I told Laura. But, you know, she was so busy helping her faddah wit' da company. No mo' time to raise one baby, eh. And afta she became da boss, mo' worse. Da company was her baby. She sacrifice everyting for da company.

DANIEL KAMIYA

You too.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Nah. My life too small to sacrifice. But you, you different. You can make great things happen, we all know dat.

DANIEL KAMIYA

That's a heavy load to carry. Maybe too heavy.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah, I can see all of us hanging on your back. Get room for everybody or wat? Aeh, but no need worry, 'cause you one Kamiya. If you was one Taniguchi, den I pity you, and I jump off your back befo' you fall down. But you going do good, 'cause you cannot let down your Grandpa. He like brag all ova da place about you. He always saying he only had t'ird-grade education, but his son is one lawya now, and his grandson going be even betta. Here, lemme do dat. 'S one job for me. Go, go. Go read one book or someting. Or go someplace and tink about someting. Use your head, no let 'um get lazy. Aeh, wait till you taste my Korean barbecue.

(He takes over for DANIEL, who exits. TOKU scraps the grill, happily singing as he works. The song is an old, popular Japanese ditty, "Tsuki ga Detta, Detta." NOBU enters.)

NOBU KAMIYA

How you doing, Toku?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Good, good. You?

NOBU KAMIYA

I don't know. Mixed emotions. You always seem to have a good sense of who you are.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah, I guess so. Not so hard. My name is Toku Taniguchi, I was born Kaka'ako side in da year —

NOBU KAMIYA

That's not really what I meant.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Oh... den I cannot help you.

NOBU KAMIYA

I know. I have to work it out myself.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Nobu, I can ask you someting?

NOBU KAMIYA

Sure, be my guest.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

You no get tired talk to people you dunno?

NOBU KAMIYA

No. Because everybody's different, that's the point. Rich or poor, educated, uneducated, young or old, no matter. They have their own stories to tell. So I try to get to know them better, to make the extra effort, so I can serve them well.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Sound like hard work.

NOBU KAMIYA

Yes, it is. But you know, if I can't meet new people and talk to them, I'd probably shrivel up and die.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

If you was me, you woulda died long time ago.

NOBU KAMIYA

Toku, you know Kennedy was forty-one when he was president. I'm already forty-six.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Well —

NOBU KAMIYA

A young-looking forty-six, I know. But still four years away from the mid-century mark. Can you believe it? Where the hell did time go?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

I dunno. You wen' look every place or wat?

NOBU KAMIYA

Oh, I looked high and low, from one end to the other. Time just passed me by and didn't even say hello.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah, yeah. We about da same age. How I look?

NOBU KAMIYA

You look good too. Use Pond's cold cream at night before you go to bed. Helps keep the skin moist.

(*He takes out the stress card.*)

Ah, let me test you. Here, put your thumb over this spot.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Wat dis for?

NOBU KAMIYA

Testing your stress factor. I'm curious. Stress is a killer. We want to keep our stress level low; we don't want heart attacks or strokes. Okay, let me see. Yeah, I thought so.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Wat?

NOBU KAMIYA

Your color is blue. Deep blue.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Someting wrong wit' me?

NOBU KAMIYA

No. It means you're absolutely calm and relaxed. You can't get any calmer than that. That's good.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Wat about you?

NOBU KAMIYA

That's what I'm checking. Outwardly I may seem calm but... hmmm, red. Flaming, hellish red.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

'S good?

NOBU KAMIYA

Bad, real bad.

(He stands and tightly clenches his fists, arms bent at the elbows. Eyes are shut. His body is tense for ten seconds. Then he completely relaxes and sits, head down, arms dangling at his sides.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

You okay?

NOBU KAMIYA

Yeah, just a relaxation exercise.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Chee, I tought you was having one heart attack.

(DEBBIE and SUSAN enter from right and stop.)

DEBBIE

I wanna tell you something, but don't tell anyone, not even Nobu. Promise?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Of course. Bad news?

DEBBIE

I got a job offer to be a staff photographer for the *Star-Bulletin*.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Deb, that's wonderful.

DEBBIE

But I turned it down.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Why?

DEBBIE

It's a job I dreamed about for so long, and now...

SUSAN KAMIYA

It's Jeremy, yeah?

DEBBIE

He wants to return to England — to live. Can you see me living in London?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Well, at least they speak English there. If you lived in Japan, you'd be helpless. I probably know more Japanese than you now.

DEBBIE

Why do you think I never dated Japan guys. That would be something, marrying some guy from Japan and moving to the old motherland. I'd be a screwed-up foreigner in the land of cherry blossoms.

(DANIEL enters.)

DANIEL KAMIYA

Hi, I was thinking what kind of clothes I would need in Connecticut. Any ideas?

SUSAN KAMIYA

What?

DANIEL KAMIYA

It snows a lot, right?

SUSAN KAMIYA

You mean you're going?

DANIEL KAMIYA

What is it, six thousand miles away?

SUSAN KAMIYA

What happened?

DANIEL KAMIYA

I guess I'm just a son of Eli and didn't know it.

(He kisses her on the cheek and exits.)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Nobu, Nobu, did you hear?

NOBU KAMIYA

What?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Danny. He said he's going to Yale.

NOBU KAMIYA

How'd you persuade him?

SUSAN KAMIYA

I didn't say a word, not a word.

NOBU KAMIYA

You see, I told you. The power of silent persuasion.

SUSAN KAMIYA

You don't sound happy.

NOBU KAMIYA

Of course I am. But I also know that Danny's just starting out, and I'm not going to get too excited or worried

at this point in his life. I don't need the stress.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Oh, you and your stress. I'm just so happy for Danny.

(LAURA *enters.*)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Laura, Danny's going to Yale, after all.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

That's great. What'd you say to him?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Nothing. I said nothing.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Well, it worked.

DEBBIE

Let's go tell Uncle Aki.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Yes. Where is he?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

That way.

(SUSAN *and* DEBBIE *exit left.*)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Uncle and Mama washing up.

NOBU KAMIYA

They took a nap?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Yeah. Funny, no, wen you get old, you move so much slowa. But time is running out on you, so you should be moving fasta to do all da tings you wanna do. Mother Nature is all screwed up.

NOBU KAMIYA

You're right. And Time is my enemy.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Nobu, befo' I used to go crabbing in Kaneohe Marine Base. Sometimes I caught Samoan crabs dis big

(He indicates the size of a catcher's mitt.)

But da military says da area is a bird sanctuary now and we hadda get out. No fair, eh. We no hurt da birds, so why we cannot catch some crabs. Da crabs must be monstas by now.

NOBU KAMIYA

Sounds like the military is being arbitrary about this. I'll contact the provost marshal and see what I can do. For good public relations with the local people, the military should reconsider its positions. I'll start the ball rolling on Monday.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Chee, t'anks, eh.

NOBU KAMIYA

My pleasure.... Who's that with Max?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Don't know.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Neva saw dem before.

NOBU KAMIYA

Me too. Think I'll go say hello.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Good luck.

NOBU KAMIYA

Thanks.

(As he exits, he takes out a small bottle of breath freshener and sprays into his mouth.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

You know wat I was tinkin'? Afta your muddah come back from Japan and rest up, why da t'ree of us no go visit California.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Wat for?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

We can see San Francisco, visit Spenca in L'A', den go Vegas for few days.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Nah. Take Uncle Aki wit' you to Vegas. 'S enough.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Wat about you? No mo' fun if you no go.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I no feel like going.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Good for you, get away little while.

(AKI and FUMIKO enter.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

About time, you folks. Susan found you?

AKI

Yeah, yeah.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Well, we go take a walk dis way, exercise little bit.

AKI

You and Toku go. Me and your muddah go stay here talk story.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

C'mon, Aki, we walk slow.

AKI

No, no, you go. We going get mo' fun sit here talk about da old days.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Okay.

(LAURA and TOKU exit right.)

AKI

Good, yeah, take a nap little while.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Yeah. Bad habit.

AKI

Getting old.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Yeah, makule. Wen I was young, I used to climb da mango trees, and my muddah used to say, "Abunai, bumbai you pilikia!" And I always yell back, "Not dangerous for me. I was born in da year of da monkey!"

AKI

Sometimes I wish da kids could see me wen I was young and sassy. I was one sportscar den. Wooooosssshhhh! Now dey look at me, and dey see one Model-T jalopy.

(He pretends he's steering a bouncy jalopy.)

Chukka lakka chukka lakka chukka lakka. Aeh, how you like da ride, Fumi?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Jus' like we riding down one old Kona road.

AKI

Yup, 's da way used to be. You miss dose times?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Well, we used to work hard, but if I look back now, I tink we had a good life. You too?

AKI

Hmmm. We always had food to eat, clothes to wear. Living in Kona was special, I guess. Good weather, lots of fruits to eat, plenty fishing. Da simple life.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

But dose days, I neva tink I going be old like dis. Wen my muddah was getting old, I used to tink, why she gotta walk li'dat, why she forget tings, why she always complaining dis part hurt, dat part hurt. And she tell me, "Someday you going find out wat I mean." Sure enough, now my body doing da same ting to me.

AKI

Same wit' me. Now my koshi sore.

(Indicates his lower back.)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Me here now.

(Rubs her shoulder.)

AKI

Sometimes here sore.

(*Touches his ankle.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Mine worse. Right here.

(*She stands and bends over and rubs both calves.*)

AKI

How 'bout dis? Hiza-bonsan.

(*Rubs kneecaps.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

But my hands too.

AKI

Wait, you no can say dis. My oshiri sore, da bone.

(*Rubs his rear end by the tail bone.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh... my oshiri okay.

AKI

Yeah, da jalopy getting ready for da junk yard.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Well, you still da bes' jalopy I know.

AKI

T'anks, eh. You always had smart mout'.

(*Looking out over the ocean.*)

Hmmm, I feel like I standing out by Keauhou Bay now. 1923. I wen' out dere one las' time befo' I wen' leave Kona for Honolulu.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

How old you was?

AKI

Nineteen.... Nine-teen. I used to hate pick da coffee berries dose days. Hard, hard work. Sometimes I get so mad, I used to sneak off go fishing. Wen I come home, my faddah used to yell at me. But he always eat da fish I wen' catch. It's a wonda he neva choke on da bones. I always gave him da stink eye.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

I know. You was really one rascal dose days. Tosh used to tell me.

AKI

Yeah, I was bad. But funny how I turn out so good, eh.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Miracle.

(SPENCER *and* DANIEL *enter*.)

AKI

I gotta admit, sometimes I miss da old Kona. Nowadays, you see all da hotels along da Kailua-Kona coast. Not da same. But nice fo' da tourists.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Had a good rest, Mama?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Oh yeah, 's one ting, I no mo' trouble sleeping.

AKI

You lucky. Me, sometimes I no can sleep, so I go out in da nursery and walk around da plants or sit unda da *plumeria* tree.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Once, I came in the morning and found him asleep under the tree. I thought he was dead.

AKI

'S not one bad way to go. Unda da clear Hawaiian night sky, wit' all da stars twinkling, you jus' slip away.

(NOBU *and* MAX *enter*.)

NOBU KAMIYA

With the Hawai'i Land Trust Act, you actually get an alternative way of owning real estate.

LAM

Yeah, I read about that in da *Advertiser*, but I didn't pay much attention.

NOBU KAMIYA

See, under this law, the trustee, say a bank, holds the legal, equitable title of the property. But you as the buyer would keep what we call "beneficial interest," which means you can occupy, manage, finance, and even sell the property.

LAM

If I ask you to repeat what you just said, you think I might understand what you just said?

AKI

Max, go buy someting on da Big Island in Kona, den I can come visit you.

NOBU KAMIYA

Talk about Kona. There's the Paradise Garden Villas in Keauhou-Kona. A furnished, two-bedroom, two-bath unit on fee simple land, you can buy for two hundred eighty thousand.

AKI

Two hundred eighty thousand! Fumi, I neva tought Kona land going be wort' so much.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Yeah, our days was only country wit' lotta *kiawe* trees.

AKI

We had dis one house. My faddah and one neighbor, Yamada-san, wen' build 'um. Only trouble, my old man neva know nuttin' about being one carpenta. And Yamada-san was real cockeyed. No kidding. So da work was real kapulu. Da house was so lopsided, I used to fall down all da time and roll around on da floor.

(DEBBIE and SUSAN enter.)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Can you believe those women? Somebody should say something to them.

DEBBIE

Well, they gotta be tourists.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Even so. They should know better than to go around naked.

NOBU KAMIYA

Women naked — on the beach?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Yes, two haoles.

NOBU KAMIYA

Are they attractive?

SUSAN KAMIYA

What difference does that make?

NOBU KAMIYA

Well, nothing. Those women probably don't know the law. I'd better investigate this.

LAM

I'll go too, in case they only speak Chinese and you need a translator.

NOBU KAMIYA

Thanks, Max.

(*They exit.*)

AKI

Susan, you sure dey naked?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Very naked.

AKI

Oooohhh. Well, I gotta go use da bat'room.

(*He proceeds upstage, then slowly turns to go stage right.*)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Aki!

DEBBIE

Uncle, shame on you.

AKI

Aeh, wassamadda. I'm old, but I not dead.

(*He exits. SUSAN and DANIEL remain upstage, while the others stay downstage.*)

SUSAN KAMIYA

Grandpa is so funny.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yeah, he's amazing. I don't think he'll ever retire. He'll never give up his nursery.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Someday he'll have to.

DANIEL KAMIYA

I don't want Grandpa wasting away in an old folks' home.

SUSAN KAMIYA

We wouldn't let it happen. He'll stay with us. Don't underestimate your father. He knows the right thing to do. And he loves Grandpa more than he shows. You should see that.

DANIEL KAMIYA

If anything happens to Grandpa and he needs me, I'll come home and never leave.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Yes. I understand.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, why you like sell da business?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

I no like sell.

SPENCER KAMIYA

But Laura said she selling —

FUMIKO KAMIYA

No can help. Wat I can do?

SPENCER KAMIYA

No let her. 'S your business. Daddy left 'um for you.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

But Laura do all da work. She da boss.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Tell her how much da business mean to you.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

She wen' try her bes'.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Why she wanna quit for?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

You talk to her.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I tried, but you know Laura.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Too late, anyway.

SPENCER KAMIYA

No say dat.

DEBBIE

Spenca, you only making tings worse.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

All wat Daddy work for gone. From one small company he struggle and build 'um up, but now.... Daddy was so happy wen da company reach da twentieth anniversary. He wen' make one big party. 'S wen you was on da mainland and neva like come home. At da party, Daddy said, "Good, eh, Mama, everybody enjoying demselves. In twenty mo' years we go make one mo' party like dis." No can make da party now.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, no listen to Laura.

DEBBIE

Not dat easy. You dunno wat happen. Da business climate wen' change. Some construction firms couldn't make it. High interest rates, soft economy, less construction. Was really bad.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Dammit, Laura should've handled the business betta.

DEBBIE

Not her fault.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Sure it is. Gotta be.

(NOBU *and* AKI *enter.*)

NOBU KAMIYA

Susan, you have to be more precise when you describe a situation to a third party.

SUSAN KAMIYA

What's wrong?

NOBU KAMIYA

Those women were not naked.

SUSAN KAMIYA

They were too.

NOBU KAMIYA

They were topless. There is a distinct and visible difference between naked and topless.

SUSAN KAMIYA

So you were disappointed.

AKI

No, he was okay. I was disappointed.

SUSAN KAMIYA

Oh, Aki, you were not.

(LAURA and TOKU enter.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Guess wat? Max talking to da naked girls.

NOBU KAMIYA

They were topless, not naked. Right, Toku?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

No ask me. Laura wen' cova my eyes.

NOBU KAMIYA

Well, the girls are from Lyon, France. When they go to the Riviera, they go topless, so they didn't think —

SUSAN KAMIYA

How do you know they're French?

NOBU KAMIYA

How do I...

AKI

No look at me. You da lawya. I like see you talk your way outta dis.

DEBBIE

Don't be too hard on Nobu. After all, he is the father of your son.

NOBU KAMIYA

Yeah, where would Danny be without me?

AKI

And where would you be wit'out me? And where would I be wit'out my faddah? And where would my faddah be —

DEBBIE

Uncle, we get da message.

AKI

Yeah, no get me started about da generations. Jus' give us second generation some credit — da nisei.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I think you nisei are wonderful.

AKI

I tink so. Yeah, we hadda deal wit' da old Japan style of our parents and learn da American way too. Was not so easy. 'S like trying to eat one whole T-bone steak wit' only chopsticks. But we tried our bes'.

DEBBIE

Right!

(*She hugs* AKI.)

AKI

Someday da nisei going all pass away and going be up to you, da sansei, to carry on. You gotta teach da yonsei da meaning of kuro. Susan, dat means hardship. Be like da issei, da firs' generation, my muddah and faddah. Dey had hard times, but dey was tough.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I rememba dem as quiet and relaxed. Nuttin' seemed to bodda dem.

AKI

Me, wen I was one kid, I wen' bodda dem. I used to grumble about everyting. Monkutade, dat was me. Now I say, "Okasan, Ootosan, I'm sorry. Gomen nasai."

(*Slightly misty-eyed.*)

How you like dat? I'm seventy-five years old and I still apologizing to my parents. Excuse, eh.

(He takes out a handkerchief and wipes his nose as he exits upstage, followed by DANIEL.)

DEBBIE

You know what I was thinking, Susan? What if Danny decides he likes it in Connecticut or Rome or wherever and never returns to Hawai'i?

SUSAN KAMIYA

Wherever he goes, there'll always be a little bit of Hawai'i in him, and he can spread the aloha spirit around the world. He belongs to the universe.

NOBU KAMIYA

I married the eternal romantic.

DEBBIE

Our grandparents came from Kumamoto, Japan, to Kona, Hawai'i. Our parents left Kona for Honolulu. Spence went from Honolulu to Los Angeles. Danny, the fourth generation, is off to Connecticut. Who knows, maybe Danny's grandchildren will want to live in a colony on Mars.

NOBU KAMIYA

I wonder what the real estate development will be like there.

DEBBIE

Instead of island fever, they'll have planet fever.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Da only person neva wen' anywhere is me. I neva even left dis island.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

That's gonna change. Soon as da business is sold, we're gonna travel all ova. I don't want you to be like Daddy. He neva went any place but da Big Island and O'ahu.

DEBBIE

He was always too busy.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Toku, you go. No make da same mistake like my husband.

DEBBIE

Thanks, Toku.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Fo' wat?

DEBBIE

For being there when we needed you.

NOBU KAMIYA

Spenca, remember the party your father threw to celebrate statehood?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Sure. The summer of '59.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Man, dat was some party. I ate so much laulau my unko was black fo' two days.

(The women around him move away in playful disgust.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Kato-san was so happy and drunk, he was dancing around like a geisha.

DEBBIE

I had my first taste of sake.

SUSAN KAMIYA

And I'll never forget you, Fumiko, when you ended the life of that poor chicken.

DEBBIE

Yeah, I couldn't eat chicken for a long time after that.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Laura, we should make one party for da working boys, you know, one las' time togedda.

NOBU KAMIYA

Spenca, I remember you asking your father if you could go to USC to study.

SUSAN KAMIYA

To be an aerospace engineer. And you made it, exactly what you wanted to be.

NOBU KAMIYA

The passion you had then to be in aerospace. I could see it in your eyes.

SPENCER KAMIYA

That was a long time ago. Probably sound ridiculous now if I say I'm gonna give it up and return to Hawai`i

for good.

NOBU KAMIYA

Yeah, that would be funny.

DEBBIE

You joking?

SPENCER KAMIYA

What do you think?

SUSAN KAMIYA

I think you're serious.

SPENCER KAMIYA

It would be easy to do. The physical part at least.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Wat about your job in Los Angeles?

SPENCER KAMIYA

They can replace me in a second. I'm not that important.

SUSAN KAMIYA

But all those years you put in your career.

SPENCER KAMIYA

The career? Just a job, nine to five, and collect my paycheck.

NOBU KAMIYA

What about that passion you had for aerospace?

SPENCER KAMIYA

I lost it. Somewhere between heaven and Earth. Yeah, I had dreams of building spaceships and going to the moon. Instead, I got tied up with military projects — working on missiles that kill innocent people, women and children. And you work on these projects for years, then see them canceled. And then guys are always quitting and joining other companies, and then returning, not because it means something to them, but only because of higher salaries or promotions.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

No quit your job now. Wat people going say. Shame if you come back. Poho if you waste everyting now.

SPENCER KAMIYA

But Mama, I can help you —

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Listen to Mama. Go back to L'A` We don't need you now.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I thought you would say that. You're throwing away the family business because you got tired of it, and you don't want me here to remind you.

(AKI and DANIEL return from upstage but don't join the group. They listen from the bushes, hidden from the others.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I don't care wat you think. You don't mean a damn thing to me. You think now you can come home and tell me wat I gotta do? Wat do you know about wat happened while you were having a good time on da mainland? Now I gotta listen to you, my wise little bruddah who went to da mainland? You want me to take notes while you tell me wat to do? Who da hell are you? Nobody! Nobody!

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, is it my fault you screwed up the business?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I did not.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Then who? Who's responsible?

DEBBIE

Spenca, done is done. Pau, finish.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, don't let Laura do it.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

I no blame Laura. She wen' work hard for Daddy. If you feel like dat, why you neva stay in Hawai'i and help Daddy. He had big ideas. He wanted you to take ova someday, but you neva care about dat. Afta you wen' to da mainland, Daddy neva say one word against you, but I know he was hurt. Jus' like you wen' stab him in da heart.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Mama, we go home. Toku, let's go.

(LAURA and TOKU exit.)

NOBU KAMIYA

Spenca, Laura just ran into bad luck. It finally came down to risking bankruptcy or selling now and making sure the workers still had jobs. That was Laura's concern. She could've been stubborn and fought to the end, but she didn't want to hurt the workers. This way, they can keep their jobs. She made sure the other company wouldn't fire her workers. It's in writing. I handled it.

DEBBIE

You know, a lot of them — like Kato-san — were with Daddy from way back. Laura was worried especially for da olda workers. It's for the best, Spenca, really. I no lie to you.

(NOBU *and* SUSAN *exit*.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, if I wen' stay home, you think maybe I could have saved the business?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Shiran.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Don't say you don't know. Tell me.

DEBBIE

Mama, Laura was Daddy's bes' worka. Rememba, Daddy said dat one night. He said nobody worked harda dan Laura and dat da working boys all respected her. Dat made Daddy real happy. Rememba? He was so proud of her.

(FUMIKO *nods*.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Mama, I wish I could make things betta. I wish I could push time back to 1959 and change everything. I would make it all the way you wanted. I'm sorry if I... I...

(AKI *and* DANIEL *enter*.)

AKI

Aeh, Spenca, today wen I look at you from da back and I saw da way you walk, I tought sure was your faddah all ova again. Yo nitoru, eh, Fumi?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Yeah.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I wonda.

AKI

You cannot see yourself da way I see you, but 's da true fact. Yup. Blood is strong. You know, me and your faddah we used to always talk about dis and dat, and I tell you one ting. He neva had bad feeling in his body for anybody. He was like dat from kid time. Real good-hearted guy. And if you was happy on da mainland, den he was happy for you. Because he undastood wat you was feeling.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I hope so.

AKI

Yeah. He knew. 'Cause he was young once too. And dat time Kona was too small for him. Well, 's all I going say, 'cause I dunno wat else to say.

(LAURA and TOKU return. His arms are filled with items.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Mama, you ready?

AKI

Aeh, where you folks going?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Home.

AKI

Wat you mean? Too early.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Too late.

AKI

Toku, you said you going make Korean barbecue.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yeah, but Laura like go.

AKI

Nemmine Laura. Me da old fut in dis family; you listen to me. C'mon, I hungry. You was bragging about your special recipe. I like taste.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

We go stay.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No.

(TOKU looks at AKI and the others.)

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Laura, we staying!

(He drops everything on the ground.)

AKI

Okay! I help you folks. Where da charcoal, where da... We staying! Aeh, dat was good.

(He slaps TOKU on the back as they exit.)

DEBBIE

I'll get da charcoal. Come on, Laura, come.

(They exit. MAX returns.)

LAM

Spense!

(SPENCER goes to him, away from his mother.)

Aeh, I get two French chicks waiting for us. We go.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Now?

LAM

Aeh, dey not going wait till Christmas. Next week dey flying to Tahiti. I made one date for us tomorrow night.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I told you I get my father's memorial service.

LAM

Oh yeah. I forgot. I was so excited.

(He goes to the ice cooler and takes out three soda cans.)

Dat means I gotta handle two by myself. Might kill me. Wat da hell, I die happy.

(LAURA and DEBBIE, carrying the charcoal bag, return and go to FUMIKO.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Well, I guess no harm talk to da wahines.

LAM

Right. We get some culture if nuttin' else. Mrs' Kamiya, I going borrow your son little while.

(*They exit.*)

FUMIKO KAMIYA

I wen' get mad at Spenca. I dunno why.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I know how much da business meant to you, Mama. Spenca neva have to tell me dat.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Da business gone. Me good for nuttin', 's why. No mo' head. I neva can help you.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No, Mama, not dat.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Wen Daddy firs' started da business, I told him, "Let me go to da office, I can do someting." But he always said, "You stay home, take care da kids." I wish I wen' force him to let me help. I wish... but I'm so stupid, wat I can do?

LAURA TANIGUCHI

No say dat, please. You wen' help plenty. Wit'out you, Daddy couldn't do anyting. Because you wen' work so hard at home, Daddy could concentrate on da business side.

DEBBIE

'S right, Mama. Da work you did at home was so important. You raised us. We were so lucky.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

I was hoping even though Daddy wen' die, he was still going help you run da business.

DEBBIE

He did, Mama. Laura kept it going a long time.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Maybe Spenca could've done betta.

DEBBIE

No, not Spenca. He would've been bad, because his heart wouldn't have been in it. I bet he would say da same ting. You did good, Laura; nobody could've done betta.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Kato-san came ova to me da odda day, and he said he was sorry for wat happen. He felt like was his fault.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Kato-san Maui boy. From Kahului. He play hard, but he work hard too. 'S wat Daddy liked about him.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Afta Daddy wen' pass away, and couple guys wen' work for somebody else, Kato-san told me, "No worry, Laura, da res' of us going stick wit' you all da way. I talk to dem already." He made me cry. I going miss dem. I dunno wat I going do witout da business. Mama...

(LAURA cries. FUMIKO tries to console her, but she weeps too.)

DEBBIE

It's not da end of da world. It's jus' da end of... da Kamiya Corpora... 's wat I hate about being Japanese. Too damn dopey about stupid things.... I neva mean dat. Laura, Mama, I'm sorry. It's just I...

(There is a tableau with DEBBIE and LAURA on either side of FUMIKO, linked by arms and hands. They sit in sorrowful silence as the lights fade to black.)

Act 2, Scene 2

Scene 2

(It is after dinner. SPENCER and MAX enter.)

LAM

I promised da girls we going take dem to see Don Ho Tuesday night. We let him do da work, get 'um in da mood. I tell you, da French wahines no going get chance. Da Don Ho show is like one aphrodisiac — da wahines go halulu. Foolproof plan.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, like da time we wen' double date and wen' up by Hanauma Bay to see da submarine races.

LAM

Dat was wen we were juniors in high school. Dis different. Now we go to my condo. I take Chantal to my bedroom, you take Anik to my office.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Chee, t'anks. Really romantic, your office.

LAM

No get picky. Use da couch in dere. Lumpy, but not bad.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Afta I return from L`A`, I going find me one nice local girl and get married.

LAM

Yeah, forget da haole wahine from Texas.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Who said she was haole?

LAM

She from Texas, right?

SPENCER KAMIYA

So wat? Gwen's Chinese.

LAM

Oh, no wonda. Aeh, Chinese wahines tough minded; you gotta watch out. I should know.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Well, da main thing is dat I'm coming home. Who said dat, "You can't go home again"?

LAM

You can't go home again.... My muddah said dat.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, I'm serious.

LAM

You dunno my muddah. She said everyting once in her life. Afta I got outta da Army, I was going home to live, but my muddah said, "You cannot come home, go out and work and no loaf around."

(NOBU, SUSAN, *and* DANIEL *enter*.)

NOBU KAMIYA

Spenca, you definite about returning home?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yeah, made up my mind. Twenty-one years on the mainland is enough. I wanna walk around in my bare feet again.

SUSAN KAMIYA

What would you do here?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Oh, I got some money saved up. Some stocks. Made some good investments. I'll sell my condo in Redondo Beach. I didn't blow it all away in a wild and crazy life. Maybe I'll buy a saimin stand.

(DEBBIE *returns.*)

NOBU KAMIYA

Let me know if I can help you in any way.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Thanks, Nobu. I appreciate it.

SUSAN KAMIYA

We'll see you at the memorial service.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Yes.

SUSAN KAMIYA

I'm glad you're coming home.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Thank you.

NOBU KAMIYA

See you, Max; you got my card.

LAM

Yeah, t'anks.

(*To* DANIEL.)

You need help? Here, let me.

(MAX *helps carry some items. All exit except for SPENCER and DEBBIE.*)

DEBBIE

Why don't you stay in da back house? 'S yours, you know.

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, it belongs to you. I don't deserve it. I'll find my own place.

DEBBIE

You know wat? I'm not going to marry Jeremy and move to England. I'm not even going to da Middle East. I belong in Hawai`i. Hawai`i da bes'.

SPENCER KAMIYA

What happen?

DEBBIE

If Jeremy loves me, he can live in Hawai`i. I got things to do here. I realized it when I was wit' Mama and Laura today.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Like wat?

DEBBIE

I'm gonna stay here and take pictures of Hawai`i. Not da tourist kine wit' only scenery. But real pictures. Pictures of da people and all da different faces and colors. People working, playing, laughing, crying. Da dark side and da bright side. And someday I'm gonna publish 'um in a book.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Sounds exciting.

DEBBIE

I dunno wat I was thinking about. Everyting I want is right here. I don't have to go anywhere. I told Mama already.

SPENCER KAMIYA

She was happy, eh.

DEBBIE

Oh yeah. And, Spenca, I know deep in her heart, Mama happy you coming home.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I hope so. T'anks, Debbie.

(AKI and FUMIKO enter.)

AKI

Well, tonight I can get one good sleep.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

You wen' drink your medicine?

AKI

Oh, forget.

(*Yelling offstage.*)

Aeh, Toku, bring me one cup watta. Once in a while, I forget drink. You too?

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Sometimes.

AKI

Too much excitement today, 's why. Spenca, you gotta drink medicine like us?

SPENCER KAMIYA

Not yet.

AKI

Good. Take care of your body. You only get one. Your health da mos' important ting.

(*TOKU enters with the cup of water.*)

T'ank you.

(*He swallows his pill with the water.*)

Okay, now we can go.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Toku, you going to da car?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Yup.

FUMIKO KAMIYA

Mo' betta I go wit' you now.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Okay.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Toku, you serious about opening a restaurant?

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Well, I was talking to Laura. Too young to retire, no mo' money, gotta do someting.

SPENCER KAMIYA

If I can help... if you let me, I got some money saved up. I can help you get started.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Sure. I no mo' shame. I take all da help I can get.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Good. Thanks.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

By da way, I wish tings wen' betta wit' da company. You know, I wen' learn plenty from your faddah.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Open that restaurant. I'll be your first customer.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Well, da firs' one might be small. Someting like Toku's Cafe. But if get popular, we might open up one branch, den one nodda one. For da grand opening, I might invite da governor to come taste my chicken heka, da Ariyoshi Special.

DEBBIE

We betta go, Toku.

TOKU TANIGUCHI

Okay.

(TOKU, DEBBIE, *and* FUMIKO *exit*.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

(*Offstage*.)

Toku! Toku!

AKI

You neva talk to Laura yet, eh?

SPENCER KAMIYA

No, why?

AKI

I not sticking around for dat. You on your own. Me chicken shit. Look out, she coming.

(AKI *hurries upstage by the bushes, hides, and listens*. LAURA *enters and sees only* SPENCER. *She folds*

the tablecloth and assembles the remaining items.)

SPENCER KAMIYA

Laura. I said things I shouldn't have. I was confused.... Sorry.

(She continues cleaning up silently.)

I don't blame you for being mad at me. I acted pretty stupid.... Actually it was better that you helped Daddy with the business instead of me. I would've made Daddy's life miserable with my complaining. But you were different. You were great. Well, I just wanted to let you know....

(He starts to leave.)

LAURA TANIGUCHI

In a way... I was happy you went to the mainland. I loved working with Daddy. We shared so many things togedda. Lots of times afta work, he would brew some Kona coffee, and the two of us would sit in the office by ourselves just talking about the day's work. He loved his coffee. He put his feet on the desk and just relaxed. He neva went drinking with the boys afta work. He stayed in the office to talk with me. Those were the happiest times of my life. I think Daddy enjoyed talking to me too. I hope so.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I'm sure he did.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

Maybe I should thank you. If you had stayed home, then I would've have missed out on all those times with Daddy. Because he wouldn't have needed me then. He would've depended on you.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I don't know. Maybe not.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

I guess I sound selfish, but my days with Daddy is someting you can neva have. Daddy went out of his way to make me feel important, to make me feel appreciated. He was so good, and you neva really knew him. I'll always cherish my time with him.

SPENCER KAMIYA

I envy you. You deserve the good memories you have of Daddy. At least you didn't fail him like I did.

LAURA TANIGUCHI

But... I wasn't going to tell you this. Mama and Debbie don't know, not even Toku. But the night before Daddy passed away, he was dreaming or delirious. He was restless in bed. I was alone with him that time and I said, "Daddy, what's wrong? It's me, Laura." But all he said was, "Spenca, come help me. Spenca." I guess he was still thinking of you at the end.

(LAURA exits. AKI peers out from the bush.)

AKI

You folks had one good talk or wat?

SPENCER KAMIYA

You one big help, Uncle.

AKI

I tell you one ting. Wen you get old like me, you know wen to talk and wen to walk.

(MAX *and* DANIEL *enter*.)

Danny, you ready to go?

DANIEL KAMIYA

Anytime you are.

LAM

Look at dat sunset.

DANIEL KAMIYA

I don't think I'll see a more beautiful sunset anywhere.

AKI

You shoul'da seen da one from da Kona coast wen I was one kid. Knock your eyes out. Well, Max, hope I see you again.

LAM

Oh yeah. Now dat Spenca returning, I going be hanging out wit him.

AKI

Good. I figga I going be around anodda twenty-five years, so get plenty time. I take you to da cockfights sometime.

LAM

It's a deal.

AKI

Yeah, I gotta live long enough to talk to Danny's children. 'S wat grandparents for, you know, to tell da kids wat life was like in da old days, so dey no forget where dey came from.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Grandpa, you give meaning to what Carl Jung once said.

AKI

Wat dat?

DANIEL KAMIYA

He said, "The afternoon of human life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life's morning."

(AKI tries hard to conceal his puzzlement.)

AKI

Carl Yung, eh? Yeah, he was one smart Chinese man. We go already. Tomorrow morning we gotta get two plumeria trees ready for Mrs' Wallace.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Take it easy, Danny.

DANIEL KAMIYA

Yeah, see you guys.

LAM

No shovel too much manure.

(DANIEL exits. AKI is about to follow but stops.)

AKI

I tell you one ting. Dat kid woulda made one tarrific nurseryman.

(He cocks his head, smiles wistfully, then exits.)

LAM

Well, brah, I hope you know wat you doing, coming back home.

SPENCER KAMIYA

Aeh, who knows. Kinda scary. But I gotta take the chance. I was missing something on the mainland. Maybe it's the way of life here. This is my last hope. Things gotta change for the better. If nuttin' else, at least I'll be back with my people and I'll have native soil between my toes again.

(The stage darkens as the sun sinks into the ocean. The glow of the charcoal in the grill becomes brighter and is reflected on SPENCER, who stands behind the grill. The effect of the glow and the darkness on stage is one of serenity. A native son has returned home. Lights dim to black.)

The End